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EDITORIAL NOTES

It may not be out of place to comment editorially on the difficulty which such a journal as this experiences in securing the right

Educational Discussions Should be Impersonal and Scientific kind of material to place before its readers. There is educational experience of the greatest value going to waste all over the country because teachers and administrative officers do not know how to report their doings. Here are a few examples. A school superintendent who has worked out an organization for helping pupils to study refuses to report the progress of his organization because it would seem like boasting. There are doubtless others who have the same hesitancy about writing for educational publications. What these people need, and what we all need, is to cultivate the scientific attitude which is exhibited by writers and readers in all of the other technical journals. A physician or a surgeon who has treated a case with success reports the case to his colleagues as a case to be studied and understood. The impersonal attitude of the physician probably grows out of his recognition of the fact that any success he has had depends on his discovery of natural laws and his conformity to these laws. When he reports a case therefore he treats it as a report of natural law, not as a boast of personal achievement. Again, the engineer who has solved a difficult problem sends his plans to a technical journal with comments on his reasons for what he did. This is read with interest by other engineers and by students of engineering as a body of technical, scientific suggestion. The great discoveries of physics and chemistry and physiology are published without hesitation by the scientists who work in these fields. Why should teachers have a different attitude? The answer to this question is probably to be found in the failure of most educators to assume toward their work the scientific attitude.

A second type of difficulty arises because some thoroughly practical men, when they sit down to write, feel that they must make abstract statements and must write about a great many different topics. The editors of this **They Should Not be Abstract** Journal have sought time and time again to get such material as that which was supplied by Superintendent Whitcher

in the January number of the *Elementary School Teacher*, and when the material came to hand—if indeed it came at all—it consisted not of a plain statement of details of actual experience, such as Superintendent Whitcher gave, but of abstract general statements about education in general. Or if facts were included with the general comments on education they were stated in such a guarded way that no one could possibly imitate them or profit by their suggestiveness. This type of difficulty is probably to be traced to the fact that most of the books on education are full of theories rather than descriptions of actual practices. The student of the histories of education easily falls into the mistake of believing that in order to make history in this field of activity one must give vent to some speculative platitudes. The fact is, of course, that the real history of the school has consisted in the organization of courses in arithmetic, in new devices for promoting pupils, in new methods of treating grammar. *Barnard's Journal* is of importance to the student of education today because it is full of facts on such topics. No one reads the theoretical articles in that journal. Manuscript after manuscript goes back from the *Elementary School Teacher* because it consists entirely of discussions and has no examples on which the discussion can stand.

A third type of paper which goes back is that which gives some material which has been used in school and is now offered for

Device	publication but without any adequate statement of
Material	the purpose for which it was made or the situation into
Should be	which it fitted. The intelligent appreciation of a
Accompanied	dramatic exercise, for example, depends upon some
by Explanatory	knowledge of the way in which the class was brought
Statements	up to the exercise presented. Many has been the

failure resulting from a hasty effort to use an exercise clipped from an educational publication, with a class trained in a wholly different way from the class which originally succeeded with this same exercise. Indeed, when one becomes critical of the cheap suggestions which are published in journals of methods, his criticism is sometimes justified, not by the material itself, which might be useful if properly placed, but rather by the fact that there is no careful statement of how the material shall be employed. There is here

the same danger that would arise from the distribution of a prescription which is not accompanied by a discriminating statement of the uses to which the prescription may be put. From time to time even poems come with the rest of the copy sent to the editor's desk. These purport to be useful to teachers but are usually unaccompanied by any statement as to the particular methods of application.

A fourth difficulty which the editors of this Journal encounter is that people who are efficient in actual school work will not take the time to write. In other words, the claims of the profession are not heeded by these good people. They do not realize that if efficient organizers would only communicate with each other there would be great economy in the long run in the work of each because the experiences of others would be accessible to all. Colleges are making use of an instructor's published material in calling men to new positions. The recognition of the importance of a man's written work is apparent in the German schools today. The time will certainly come when a school board looking for a superintendent will take into account what he has written. The beginnings of this tendency appear at the present time in the disposition to read the annual reports of superintendents.

The purpose of this editorial is to stimulate the creation of more professional educational literature of a high type. The time has come when a hearing can be had for such a literature. Serious educators are calling for something different from the abstract discussions which filled the older treatises. Scientific studies are being made in encouraging number. What is needed now is a general movement throughout the whole teaching profession in the direction of a full impersonal discussion of all current educational activities. This Journal seeks statements of facts from educational workers everywhere. These facts should be set forth with enough detail to be used by others. They should explain difficulties as well as favoring conditions. They should be made the basis of suggestions for new investigations which may carry forward in the spirit of practical application the experience already accumulated.